

Senate Bill 2 Testimony

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President Elect of Michigan State Medical Society***



Good morning Chairwoman Haines and members of the Health Policy Committee. My name is Rose Ramirez, and I am a Family Physician practicing in Belmont, a small community on the north side of Grand Rapids. I am here on behalf of the more than 15,000 physician members of the Michigan State Medical Society to explain our opposition to Senate Bill 2.

Patients put their lives in the hands of their health care providers every day, and every day physicians, nurses, technologists and others work hard to keep that trust. Health care providers keep it by being transparent. We keep it by doing what is right, despite the pressures put upon us. But more than anything, we keep it by putting patients first.

It might seem obvious, but that's what health care is supposed to be all about—helping patients. And physicians and nurses provide the highest quality health care when we work together as a team. We are a team that strives each day for the better health of each of our patients and a team to be supported and strengthened by state policies that have the best interest of the patient in mind.

Unfortunately, Senate Bill 2 would have the opposite effect and put patients across Michigan at risk.

The bill would greatly reduce the training requirements of the individuals who lead the health care teams. It is a genuinely dangerous move that puts patient health—perhaps even patients' lives—at risk by stripping physicians from many patients' health care teams while giving some advanced practice nurses the legal ability to diagnose, treat, and write prescriptions of potentially dangerous drugs for patients; all without adequate training and without even collaborating with a medical doctor or osteopathic physician.

Today, Michigan families can count on a health care team with the training and expertise needed to treat illness or injury appropriately. Physicians undergo a minimum of 11 years of education and training, while some train for up to 20 years, depending on their specialty. For the treatment and care provided by nurses, critical education is also needed, but the training begins with 4 years of nursing education and the extra education to become an APRN can take as little as 15 months of online classes and only 16 weeks of clinical training. This is completely inadequate when compared to the training of a physician that includes a minimum of 5 years of direct patient care in a clinical environment.

When it comes to the quality of care patients receive, training makes an incredible difference. That's something I understand better than most physicians.

I entered the healthcare field as a licensed practical nurse (LPN) student and worked in the capacity of an LPN for 4 years. It was then that I made the decision to attend medical school and to get the additional training I needed to become a physician.

Of course, when a patient or one of our loved ones is confronted with an illness or an injury, the years their physician spent in training, classroom and clinical settings is the last thing on their minds. Patients just want the best possible care and they rely on a health care team working together that they trust and that has the medical training needed to take care of them.

Senate Bill 2 would undermine that trust, using the legislature to do an end-run around hundreds of years of medical science while declaring that patients simply don't need the best trained health care providers. The end result would be a health care system radically altered to put special interests above patient care and safety. That's the wrong move for Michigan and it is a dangerous move for patients.

I urge the members of the Committee to remember what health care is really all about. Please continue the remarkable work you have each done the past two years putting patients first. I hope each of you will stand up for patients and oppose Senate Bill 2.

PUT PATIENTS FIRST

Vote NO on Senate Bill 2

Senate Bill 2 does not address the training gap, threatening patient safety.

Reducing educational requirements for those who practice medicine puts patient health at risk, something doctors and nurses across Michigan work every day to prevent.

Physicians are required to train for at least seven years, and often train up to eleven years before being granted the same degree of independence sought under Senate Bill 2 for advance practice nurses after only four years of training.

Senate Bill 2 does not address patient access to care.

The Public Health Code already provides broad latitude for advance practice nurses to locate in underserved areas. No evidence has been provided to demonstrate that Senate Bill 2 will solve this problem. Furthermore, experience in other states that have adopted similar legislation found that advance practice nurses tend to locate in the same places as physicians.

Senate Bill 2 creates a legislative shortcut for training that should be acquired by experience and education.

Quality and safety within health care is not an accident. Education—not legislation—is the best way to prepare health professionals to provide the highest level of care to patients in Michigan.

Senate Bill 2 fragments a health care system that is working.

Doctors and nurses provide the highest quality health care when we work together in collaboration for the well-being of our patients.

We are a team. A team that strives each day for the better health of every Michigander. Senate Bill 2 breaks apart that team and does not have the best interest of **the patient** at heart.

Senate Bill 2 means more visits, more waiting, and higher costs for patients.

Education levels are not equal. This could lead to more visits by patients due to inadequate or mistakes in treatment, creating more waits and additional co-pays.

Senate Bill 2 is bad medicine.
Put patients first and vote NO on Senate Bill 2!

Let's be clear:

- **Senate Bill 2 does not adequately address the training gap.** Physicians are required to train for at least seven years, and often train up to eleven years before being granted the same degree of independence sought under Senate Bill 2 for advance practice nurses after only four years of training.
- **Senate Bill 2 does not address patient access to care.** The Public Health Code already provides broad latitude for advance practice nurses to locate in underserved areas. No evidence has ever been provided to demonstrate that Senate Bill 2 will solve this problem. Furthermore, experience in other states that have adopted similar legislation found that advance practice nurses tend to locate in the same manner as physicians.
- **Senate Bill 2 does provide a legislative shortcut for training that should be acquired by experience and education.** Quality and safety within health care is not an accident. Education is the best way to prepare health professionals to provide the highest level of care to patients in Michigan, not legislation.

Our organizations remain committed to working on issues such as improved patient access, efficient delivery of care, and addressing health professional shortage issues. Unfortunately, Senate Bill 2 remains focused only on giving advance practice nurses legislative and regulatory equivalence to physicians.

Senate Bill 2 does not require sufficient additional educational or training requirements to justify these increases or provide regulators with the necessary tools to manage future conflicts that may arise over the limits of the scope of practice for advance practicing nurses.

Senate Bill 2 is not about access, it is not about patient care, it is not about education and training, but rather it is about the legislative priorities of advance practice nurses. We urge you to vote against Senate Bill 2.

PATIENT CARE MEMORANDUM

TO: Michigan House Health Policy Committee

FROM: The leadership of the:

Michigan Academy of Family Physicians
Michigan Allergy and Asthma Society
Michigan Association of Osteopathic Family Physicians
Michigan Chapter of the American College of Surgeons
Michigan Dermatological Society
Michigan Orthopedic Society
Michigan Osteopathic Association
Michigan Pediatric Society
Michigan Psychiatric Society
Michigan Radiological Society
Michigan Rheumatism Society
Michigan State Medical Society
Michigan Society of Anesthesiologists
Michigan Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons
Michigan Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

Michigan Thoracic Society
Calhoun Medical Society
Genesee County Medical Society
Ingham County Medical Society
Kalamazoo Academy of Medicine
Kent County Medical Society
Macomb County Medical Society
Marquette---Alger County Medical Society
Northern Michigan Medical Society
Oakland County Medical Society
Oakland County Osteopathic Medical Association
Saginaw County Medical Society
Saginaw Osteopathic Association
Southwest Osteopathic Association
St. Clair County Medical Society
Washtenaw County Medical Society
Wayne County Medical Society

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 2 and Patient Care

DATE: September 9, 2014

On behalf of our organizations, their members and our patients, we wish to express our strong opposition to Senate Bill 2 and to ask you to continue your commitment to putting Michigan patients first. This legislation seeks to create legislative and regulatory parity for advance practice nurses and physicians despite the significant differences in the amount of training required by the two professions. Additionally, it has been claimed that this legislation will somehow address the pending health care access issues across the state resulting from the influx of new patients under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA).

(Over)